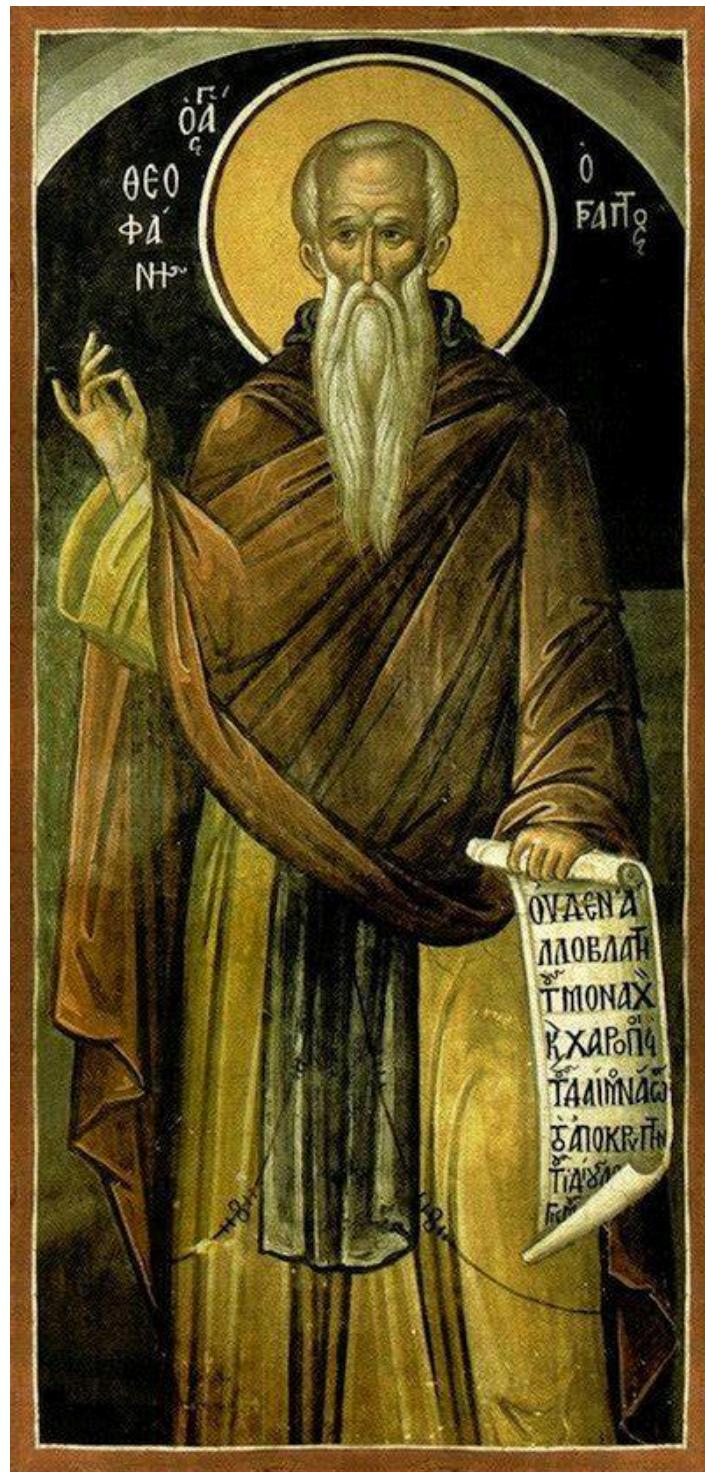


Excerpts from the Chronicle of Theophanes (A.D. 602-813) about Islamic History and Religion



The Chronicle of
THEOPHANES



Anno mundi 6095-6305 (A.D. 602-813)

Edited and translated by
HARRY TURTLEDOVE

PERSIAN KINGS 602-651

Khosroes II 591-628

Kavad II (known to Theophanes as Siroes) 628

Ardaser III 628-629

Sarbaros (also called Sarbarazas) 629

Borane 629- 630

Hormisdas V 630- 632

Yazdagird III 632-651

ARAB RULERS 622-813

Muhammad 622-632

The “rightly-guided” caliphs

Abu Bakr 632-634

Umar I 634-644

Uthman 644-656

Ali 656-661

The Umayyads

Muawiyah I 661-680

Yezid I 680-683

Muawiyah II 683- 684 (?)

Marwan I 684- 685

Abd al-Malik 685- 705

Walid I 705-715

Suleiman 715-717

Umar II 717-720

Yezid II 720-724

Hisham 724-743

Walid II 743- 744

Yezid III 44

Ibrahim 744

Marwan II 744-750

The Abbasids

Abu-l-Abbas as-Saffah (known to Theophanes as Muhammad) 750-754

Al-Mansur (known to Theophanes as Abd Allah) 754-775

Mahdi 775-785

Al-Hadi (known to Theophanes as Musa) 785-786

Harun ar-Rashid 786-809

Al-Amin (known to Theophanes as Muhammad) 809-813

Al-Mamun 813-833



ANNUS MUNDI 6122 (SEPTEMBER I, 630-AUGUST 31, 631)

A.D. 622

Roman Emperor Herakleios: 31 years: year 21

Arab ruler Muhammad: 9 years: year 9

Bishop of Constantinople Sergios: 29 years: year 22

Bishop of Jerusalem Zachariah: 22 years: year 22

Bishop of Alexandria George: 14 years: year 12

In this year⁸⁵ died Muhammad, the Saracens' ruler and false prophet. He had previously chosen his relative Abu Bakr as his successor. As soon as rumor of him arrived, everyone became afraid.

When he first appeared, the Hebrews were misled and thought he was the Anointed One⁸⁶ they expected, so that some of their leaders came to him, accepted his religion, and gave up of that of Moses, who had looked on God. Those who did this were ten in number, and they stayed with Muhammad until his death. But when they saw him eating of a camel⁸⁷ they knew he was not the man they had thought. They were at a loss as to what to do; as they were afraid to give up his religion, they stayed at his side and taught him lawless behavior toward us Christians.

I think it necessary to discuss his ancestry in full. He sprang from a noble tribe descended from Ishmael the son of Abraham, for Ishmael's descendant Nizaros is proclaimed to be the father of all Arabs. He had two sons, Moudaros and Rhabias. Moudaros begat Quraysh,⁸⁸ Qais, Themime, Asad, and other unknown tribes. They lived in the desert of Madianitin and kept cattle; they dwelt in tents. In the more distant regions the men are not of their tribe, but of that of Iektan: the Yemenites (that is, Homeritai⁸⁹). Some of them made their living from camels.

Since Muhammad was a helpless orphan, he thought it good to go to a rich woman named Khadija (who was his relative) to hire on to manage her camels and conduct her business in Egypt and Palestine. Being a bold speaker, a little later he secretly went to the woman, who was a widow, married her, and took control of her camels and property.

When he went to Palestine he lived with both Jews and Christians, and hunted for certain writings among them. He had an epileptic seizure, and when his wife noticed this she became very distressed, for she was noble and had now been joined to a man who was not only helpless but epileptic as well. He turned to conciliating her, saying, "I see a vision of the angel known as Gabriel, and faint and fall because I cannot bear up under the sight of him." She had a friend living there who was a monk exiled for false belief, and she told him everything, even the angel's name.

He wanted to reassure her, and told her, "He has spoken the truth, for this angel is sent to all prophets." She was the first to accept the false abbot's statement; she believed in Muhammad, and told other women of her tribe that he was a prophet. Then from women the report spread to men: the first was Abu Bakr, whom Muhammad left behind as successor. At last his heresy conquered the land of Ethrib⁹⁰ by force. It had at first been practiced secretly for ten years, during warfare for another ten, and openly for nine.

Muhammad taught those who harkened to him that he who killed an enemy or was killed by an enemy entered paradise. He said paradise was a place of carnal eating, drinking, and intercourse with women: there were rivers of wine, honey, and milk, and the women there were not like those here, but of another sort, and intercourse was longlasting and its pleasure enduring. He said many other prodigal and foolish things. Also, his followers were to have sympathy for one another and help those treated unjustly.

ANNUS MUNDI 6123 (SEPTEMBER 1, 631—AUGUST 31, 632)

Arab ruler Abu Bakr: 3 years

Bishop of Jerusalem Modestus: 2 years

6123. 623. 22. I. 23. I. 13.

In this year the Persians rose up against each other in civil war.

In the same year the king of the Indians sent Herakleios congratulatory gifts for his victory over the Persians: pearls and a number of precious stones.

Muhammad was already dead, but had appointed four emirs to attack Christians of Arab race. As they wanted to attack the Arabs on the day of their own sacrifice to idols, they came to a country called Moukheon, in which place was the vicar⁹¹ Theodore. When the vicar learned this from his servant Koutabas, who was a man of Qpraysh, he assembled all the desert guards. He determined from the Saracen the day and hour on which the emirs intended to attack, and attacked them at a place called Mothous. He killed three of them and most of their army, but one emir, Khalid (whom they call the sword of God⁹²), got away.

Some of the nearby Arabs received a small subsidy from the Emperor for guarding the mouths of the desert.⁹³ At that time a eunuch came to distribute the soldiers' wages. The Arabs came to get their pay, as was customary, but the eunuch drove them away, saying, "The Emperor pays his soldiers with difficulty; with how much more to such 336 dogs as you?" The oppressed Arabs went to their fellow-tribesmen and showed them the route to the land of Gaza, which is the mouth of the desert for Mt. Sinai and is very rich.

ANNUS MUNDI 6147 (SEPTEMBER 1, 655—AUGUST 31, 656)

14. 10. 3.

In this year the Arab ruler Uthman was assassinated by the inhabitants of Medina. He had been caliph for ten years. There was civil strife among the Arabs: those in the Arabian desert wanted Ali the nephew of Ali, who was Muhammad's son-in-law, while those in Syria and Egypt favored Muawiyah, who won and ruled for twenty-four years.

ANNUS MUNDI 6152 (SEPTEMBER 1, 660—AUGUST 31, 661)

19. 5. 8.

In this year an Arab heresy, that of the Kharijites,¹⁰⁷ appeared. Muawiyah overpowered them, humbling the inhabitants of Persia but favoring those of Syria. He called the ones Isamitai and the others Herakitai. He gave the Isamitai a donative of two hundred nomismata, but gave the Herakitai only thirty nomismata

ANNUS MUNDI 6164 (SEPTEMBER 1, 672—AUGUST 31, 673)

4. 17. 5.

In this year in March (or Dystros) a rainbow appeared in the sky, and all mankind shuddered. Everyone said it was the end of the world.

In this year the deniers of Christ readied a great expedition. They sailed to and wintered in Kilikia; Muhammad son of Abd Allah was at Smyrna, and Qais in Kilikia and Lykia. Muawiyah also sent the emir Khalid with yet another expedition to help them. Also, there was a plague in Egypt.

When Constantine learned of the movement of God's enemies against Constantinople, he prepared huge two-storied warships equipped with Greek fire¹¹⁴ and siphon-carrying warships,¹¹⁵ ordering them to anchor in the Proklianeseian harbor of the Caesarium.¹¹⁶

ANNUS MUNDI 6183 (SEPTEMBER 1, 691—AUGUST 31, 692)

6. 8. 5.

In this year, thanks to a lack of good sense, Justinian broke the peace with Abd al-Malik. He was foolishly anxious to resettle the island of Cyprus. A number of the Cypriots who made the effort drowned or died of sickness; the rest did return to Cyprus.

Also, Justinian would not accept the money Abd al-Malik sent, as it had a new type of stamp and had never been that way before.¹³³ When Abd al-Malik heard this, he satanically

dissembled and called on Justinian not to break the peace, but rather to accept his money. Though the Arabs could not accept the Romans' impress on their own coins, they would give the Romans the correct weight of gold and there would not be any loss from the new Arab coinage. But Justinian thought Abd al-Malik's request was caused by fear. He did not understand that what the Arabs wanted was to stop the Mardaites' inroads, and then to break the peace with a pretext that seemed plausible. This is just what happened.



Justinian II. Second reign, 705-711. AV Solidus (20mm, 4.37 g, 6h). Constantinople mint. ΑΝ ΙΗΣ ΧΗΣ ΡΕΞ ΡΕΓΝΑΝΤΙΚΜ, facing bust of Christ Pantocrator; cross behind / ΑΝ ΙΗΣ ΤΙΝΙΑ ΝΩΣ ΜΗΛΤΩΣ Α, crowned facing bust of Justinian, wearing beard and loros, holding globus cruciger inscribed PAX and cross potent set upon three steps.

Abd al-Malik also sent orders to rebuild the temple at Mecca. He wanted to take way pillars from holy Gethsemane, but Sergios the son of Mansur (a Christian who was public finance minister and was very friendly with Abd al-Malik) and his co-leader of the Palestinian Christians, Patricius (surnamed Klausus), asked him not to do this, but to persuade Justinian through their request to send other columns in place of these. This was done.



Gold dinar minted by the Umayyads in 695, which likely depicts Abd al-Malik.

ANNUS MUNDI 6184 (SEPTEMBER 1, 692—AUGUST 31, 693)

7. 9. 6.

In this year Justinian made a selection from the Slavs he had 366 resettled. He levied 30,000 men, armed them, and named them the “special army.” Their commander was named Neboulos. Justinian, confident in them, wrote to the Arabs that he would not abide by the peace which had been agreed upon in writing. Taking up his special army and all the thematic cavalry, he traveled by sea to Sebastopolis.

The hypocritical Arabs did not choose to break the peace, but imperial guilt and indiscretion forced them to do so. They armed themselves and went to Sebastopolis, though they first swore to the Emperor that they had not perverted what the two sides had agreed upon with oaths: God would be the judge and avenger of their charges.

But since the Emperor would not tolerate hearing any such thing, being instead eager for battle, they dissolved the written peace treaty and rushed against the Romans. They hung a copy of the treaty from a spear to go before them in place of a banner. Muhammad was their general as they joined battle. At first the Arabs were defeated, but Muhammad suborned the general of the Slavs allied to the Romans. He sent him a purse loaded with nomismata and, deceiving him with many promises, persuaded him to desert to the Arabs with 20,000 Slavs. Then Justinian massacred the remaining Slavs (and their wives and children) at Leukate, a precipitous place by the sea on the gulf of Nikomedea.

ANNUS MUNDI 6185 (SEPTEMBER 1, 693—AUGUST 31, 694)

8. 10. 7.

In this year Sabbatios the prince of Armenia, after learning of the Roman defeat, surrendered it to the Arabs. Also, inner Persia (known as Khorasan) came under their control. A dangerous man, Sabinos by name, rose up there and killed many Arabs—almost including Hajjaj himself—but was finally drowned in a river. From then on the Agarenes, growing bolder, ravaged Romania.

ANNUS MUNDI 6186 (SEPTEMBER 1, 694—AUGUST 31, 695)

A.D. 686

Roman Emperor Justinian: 10 years: year 9

Arab ruler Abd al-Malik: 22 years: year 11

Bishop of Constantinople Kallinikos: 12 years: year 1

In this year there was an eclipse of the sun at the third hour of the fifth of Hyperbataios (a Sunday), 134 with the result that some bright stars appeared.

Muhammad attacked Romania; he had with him the Slavs who had fled, as they had experience of Romania. He took many prisoners.

There was a slaughter of pigs in Syria...

ANNUS MUNDI 6187 (SEPTEMBER 1, 695—AUGUST 31, 696)

10. 12. 2

In this year Muhammad attacked fourth Armenia, took many prisoners, and then withdrew.

ANNUS MUNDI 6191 (SEPTEMBER 1, 699—AUGUST 31, 700)

A.D. 691

Roman Emperor Apsimaros: 7 years: year 1

Arab ruler Abd al-Malik: 22 years: year 16

Bishop of Constantinople Kallinikos: 12 years: year 6

In this year Apsimaros held the imperial power.

Also, Abd ar-Rahman rebelled in Persia, became its master, and drove Hajjaj from it.

ANNUS MUNDI 6192 (SEPTEMBER 1, 700—AUGUST 31, 701)

2. 17. 7.

In this year there was a great plague. Joining Hajjaj in Persia, Muhammad campaigned against Abd arRahman with a host of Arabs. Once they had attacked and killed him, they entrusted Persia to Hajjaj once more.

The Romans overran Syria, advancing as far as Samosata. They foraged through the surrounding country, killing many Arabs (200,000, as they say). They took a large amount of booty and many Arab prisoners and withdrew after giving the Arabs a bad scare.

ANNUS MUNDI 6193 (SEPTEMBER 1, 701—AUGUST 31, 702)

3. 18. 8.

In this year Abd Allah attacked Romania; he besieged Taranton but withdrew without having accomplished anything. He rebuilt and garrisoned Mopsuestia.

ANNUS MUNDI 6194 (SEPTEMBER 1, 702—AUGUST 31, 703)

4. 19. 9.

In this year Baanes (surnamed Heptadaimon) brought fourth Armenia under Arab rule.

Apsimaros exiled to Kephalenia Philippikos the son of the patrician Nikephoros, since he had dreamed he would become Emperor. He said that in a dream he had seen an eagle shading his head.¹⁴² When the Emperor heard that he immediately exiled him.

ANNUS MUNDI 6195 (SEPTEMBER 1, 703—AUGUST 31, 704)

5. 20. 10.

In this year the leaders of Armenia rebelled against the Saracens and killed the Saracens there. They sent messengers to Apsimaros, who brought the Romans into their country. But Muhammad's campaign against them killed many. Once he had resubjected Armenia to the Saracens, he gathered the Armenian grandees' together and burned them alive.

At around this time Azar attacked Kilikia with 10,000 men. The Emperor's brother Herakleios met him, killed most of his men, and sent the rest to the Emperor in bonds.

ANNUS MUNDI 6210 (SEPTEMBER 1, 717—AUGUST 31, 718)

Arab ruler Umar: 2 years

2. 1. 4. 13.

In this year the protospatharios Sergios, the governor of Sicily, heard that the Arabs were besieging the imperial city. At Sicily he crowned his own Emperor: a Constantinopolitan named Basil, the son of Gregory Onomagoulos. He was renamed Tiberius. He prepared defenses and created his own officers (with the advice of Sergios)...

Umar, who was ruling the Arabs, urged Maslama to retire. The Arabs pulled out in great disgrace on August 15. While their expedition was on its way back, a furious storm fell on them and scattered them: it came from God at the intercession of His Mother. God drowned some of them by Prokonnessos and other islands, and others on Apostrophoi and other promontories. Those who were left had got through the Aegean Sea when God's fearful wrath attacked them: a fiery shower descended on them, making the sea's water foam up. Once their pitch¹⁷⁶ was gone, the ships went to the bottom men and all. Only ten survived to report to us and the Arabs the magnitude of what God had done to them. Our men were able to seize five when they ran into them, but the other five escaped to tell Syria of God's might.

In the same year, because there had been a strong earthquake in Syria, Umar banned wine¹⁷⁷ from his cities and forced the Christians to apostasize. He exempted the apostates from taxation but killed those who refused, which made many martyrs. He promulgated a law that a Christian's

testimony against a Saracen was not acceptable. He also sent a doctrinal letter to the Emperor Leo, thinking to persuade him to apostasize.

ANNUS MUNDI 6234 (SEPTEMBER 1, 742—AUGUST 31, 743)

Bishop of Antioch Stephen: 2 years

2. 19. 9. 13. 1.

In this year the Arabs' ruler Hisham died. He had left the holy church of Antioch a widow for forty years, as the Arabs kept it from having a patriarch. Hisham had had as a friend a Syrian monk named Stephen: Stephen was rather uncultured, but pious. Hisham urged the eastern Christians to choose Stephen if they wished to be allowed to have a patriarch. They thought the opportunity God-sent, chose him for the throne of the city of God,²¹¹ and have not been hindered up to the present.

In this year Hisham's son Walid took power over the Arabs. To him Constantine sent the spatharios Andrew and Artavasdus the logothete²¹² Gregory; both of them were seeking terms for an alliance.

There was a severe drought and an earthquake in the area where the mountains in the desert of Saba meet each other, and villages were gulped down into the ground.

In the same year Kosmas the patriarch of Alexandria and his city became orthodox, emerging from the wicked doctrines of the monothelites, which had held sway since the time of Cyrus, Alexandria's bishop during the reign of Herakleios.

A host of Arabs under Ghamr attacked Romania, took many prisoners, and withdrew.

In June a sign appeared in the northern sky.

Walid ordered the tongue of the holy metropolitan of Damascus, Peter, cut out, because he openly condemned the impiety of the Arabs and Manichaeans.²¹³ Then he exiled Peter to Arabia Felix, where he died: a martyr for Christ. Those who tell of this say it is fully assured because they heard it themselves.

Peter's emulator and namesake, Peter of Maiouma, was at this time shown to be a voluntary martyr for Christ. When he became ill he summoned some important Arabs, who were his intimates because he was chartularius in charge of the payment of public taxes. He told them, "You should gain a reward from God for visiting me, even if you 417 friends are outside the faith. I want you to be my eyewitnesses that this is the situation: everyone who does not believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in consubstantiality, and in the Trinity in Unity which

rules life, has maimed his soul and deserves eternal punishment. f Even your false prophet Muhammad is such a person, and a forerunner \ of the Antichrist. If you are convinced by my testimony about the heaven and earth, abandon his mythology today, lest you be punished with him: for I feel goodwill toward you." When they heard his theological disquisition on these and other matters they were struck with amazement and fury, but thought it good to be patient, since they believed he was delirious from his illness. After he recovered from it, though, he began to cry out even more arrogantly, "Anathema to Muhammad, to his false writings, and to everyone who believes in him." Then he was shown to be a martyr, and submitted to punishment from the sword.

Our holy father John has honored him with eulogies. John is well-called "Chrysorrhoas" because the brilliant grace of the Spirit gleams golden in him, both in his words and in his life. The impious Emperor Constantine hurled annual anathemas at him because of his surpassing orthodoxy.

In place ofjohn's patronym "Mansur" (which means, "he who has been washed clean"), Constantine, in his Jewish arrogance, renamed the new teacher of the church "Manzeros." 214

In the same year Walid resettled the Cypriots in Syria.

ANNUS MUNDI 6235 (SEPTEMBER 1, 743—AUGUST 31, 744)

Arab ruler Walid: 1 year

3. 1. 10. 77. 2 1 5 2.

In this year a sign appeared in the north, and dust fell in various places. There was also an earthquake at the Caspian Gates.

On Thursday, April 16, Walid was killed by the Arabs after he had ruled for one year. Yezid Leipsos seized the rule. He dispersed a large sum of money and conquered Damascus, receiving from the Arabs in Damascus, Persia, and Egypt recognition as their ruler. As soon as he heard of this, Muhammad's son Marwan, who was administering Armenia, overran Mesopotamia. He seemed to be fighting for Walid's sons and against Yezid. After five months Yezid died, leaving behind his brother Ibrahim as his successor in Damascus. At his command Marwan, who commanded the forces in Mesopotamia, went to Edessa, and from there to a camp called Garis in the vicinity of Damascus and Antilebanon. He engaged Suleiman there by the river Lita (that is, the Kakos), routed him, and killed 20,000 men. Only Suleiman and a few others got away safe to Damascus. Once Suleiman was in Damascus, he killed the sons of Walid, for whom Marwan had seemed to be fighting. He left Damascus after appropriating an adequate amount of money. Then Marwan also overran Damascus, and killed many of its prominent citizens and those who had

aided in the murder of Walid and his sons; others he mutilated. He transferred all its money and treasures to Harran, a Mesopotamian city.

ANNUS MUNDI 6240 (SEPTEMBER 1, 748—AUGUST 31, 749)

8. 5. 15. 19. 5.

In this year the people of the interior of Persia—known as Khorasanians or Black-cloaks²²³—moved against Marwan and his entire dynasty, who had ruled after Muhammad the false prophet up until Marwan: that is, the line of him who was known as the son of Umayya.²²⁴ ²⁵ Ever since the murder of Walid the Arabs had been fighting among themselves and giving each other no rest. The sons of Ekhim and Ali, who were relatives of the false prophet, were fugitives in hiding in lesser Arabia. When Ibrahim became their leader they met and sent one of their freedmen, Abu Muslim, to some of the leading men in Khorasan, asking the Khorasanians to ally with them against Marwan.

The Khorasanians met in the presence of a man named Qahtabah. They took counsel among themselves and incited the slaves to rise against their masters, killing many in one night. Once armed with the weapons, horses, and money of these men, they had a powerful position. However, they were divided into two tribes, Qaisites and Yemenites. Realizing this, Abu Muslim stirred up the Yemenites, who were more powerful, against the Qaisites. Once he had killed them, he went to Persia with Qahtabah. He attacked ibn-Sayyar and, after he won, took over all ibn-Sayyar's men, perhaps as many as 100,000. Then Abu Muslim came upon ibn-Habayrah, who was encamped with 200,000 men, and drove him off. Abu Muslim overtook Marwan, who had 300,000 men, at the Zab River, and in his attack killed a countless throng. As is written,²²⁶ one man was seen pursuing a thousand, and two making ten thousand run. Marwan, seeing that his men were being overwhelmed in this way, went to Harran; after he crossed the river he cut the bridge, which was made of boats. He took up all his money and his retinue and fled to Egypt with 3,000 men who had been born in his household.

ANNUS MUNDI 6242 (SEPTEMBER 1, 750—AUGUST 31, 751)

Arab ruler Muhammad: 5 years

10. 1. 17. 21. 7.

In this year the Khakideis rebelled against the Persian Blackcloaks, who killed 40,000 of them in the mountains of Emesa. The Persians did the same thing to the Qaisites in Arabia. When the embalmed head of Marwan arrived, most of the rebellions stopped.

ANNUS MUNDI 6246 (SEPTEMBER 1, 754—AUGUST 31, 755)

Bishop of Constantinople Constantine: 12 years

14. 5. 21. I. 4.

In this year Muhammad—also known as Abu-l-Abbas—died after ruling for five years. His brother Abd Allah was in Mecca, the Arabs' place of blasphemy. He wrote to Abu Muslim in Persia to guard the capital for him, as it had been allotted to him. Abu Muslim learned that Abd Allah (son of Ali and brother of Salim), the chief general of Syria, had seized the capital for himself and was on his way to conquer Persia. The Persians opposed Abd Allah, but the inhabitants of Syria were devoted to him and fought on his side. Abu Muslim raised his army and engaged Abd Allah near Nisibis, where he defeated him and killed many of his men. Most of them were Slavs²³⁰ and Antiochenes. Only Abd Allah got away, and after a few days he asked for a safe conduct from the other Abd Allah (Muhammad's brother), who had come to Persia in great haste from Mecca. This Abd Allah imprisoned the other in a tumbledown shack. He ordered its foundations dug out from under it, and thus secretly killed him.

He prevented Abu Muslim from venting his wrath on the Syrian Arabs, although they had revolted against the Black-cloaks and captured many places in Palestine and the seacoast, including Emesa. Abu Muslim had been planning to attack them with his soldiers; now he became angry at Abd Allah and went to the Persian interior with his host. Very much afraid of him, Abd Allah recalled him with persuasive speeches, summonses, and the loathsome symbols of their rule—I mean, the false prophet Muhammad's staff and sandals. He asked Abu Muslim to come one day's journey toward him so he could give Abu Muslim the same sort of thanks he would his father. Deceived, Abu Muslim approached him with 100,000 cavalrymen, but when he joined Abd Allah, Abd Allah killed him with his own hands. Abu Muslim's mob was dispersed on the same day; they went off after having been given honors not easy to reckon. In this way Abd Allah solidified his rule.

ANNUS MUNDI 6256 (SEPTEMBER 1, 764—AUGUST 31, 765)

A.D. 756

Roman Emperor Constantine: 35 years: year 24

Arab ruler Abd Allah: 21 years: year 10

Bishop of Rome Constantine: 5 years: year 3

Bishop of Constantinople Constantine: 12 years: year 11

In this year the Turks once more sallied forth into the area of the Caspian Gates and Iberia. They battled with the Arabs, and many on both sides lost their lives.

By the following knavery Abd Allah took away the rule from Isa ibn Musa, to whom, as was said above, the third lot (to rule after Abd Allah) had fallen. He saw that Isa was suffering from a

headache and dizziness, and persuaded him that he would cure him if Isa would implant in his nostrils a sneezing potion concocted by Abd Allah's physician, whose name was Moses and who was a deacon of the church of Antioch. Moses had already been bribed into concocting a bitter, numbing drug. Abd Allah talked Isa into accepting the nasal plug; according to plan, he had been reassured by eating with Abd Allah. But 436 when the passages in his head were filled, he was robbed of all his senses and their ruling energies, and lay down without a sound. Then Abd Allah summoned his race's leaders and chiefs and said, "What do you think of this fellow who will rule you?" They unanimously rejected him and gave guarantees to Abd Allah's son Muhammad (who was surnamed Mahdi), then brought the unconscious Isa to his home. When he recovered after three days, Abd Allah consoled him with false excuses, but requited the insult with a hundred talents of gold.

ANNUS MUNDI 6301 (SEPTEMBER 1, 808—AUGUST 31, 809)

Arab ruler Muhammad: 4 years

7. I. 13. 4.

In this year—the second indiction—in March the Arabs' ruler Harun died in inner Persia, which is known as Khorasan. His son Muhammad, who was altogether incompetent, succeeded to the rule. With his father's forces his brother Abd Allah rebelled against him from Khorasan: this led to a civil war among their people. Thereupon the inhabitants of Syria, Egypt, and Libya divided up into different states and upset public affairs and each other. They were ruined by murders, robberies, and every kind of misdeed toward both themselves and the Christians under them. It was then that the churches in the holy city of Christ our God were laid waste, as were the monasteries of the two great groups of eremitic monks²⁸⁴ (Khariton and Kyriakos), that of St. Saba, and the remaining coenobitic communities of Sts. Euthymios and Theodosios. This slaughter, directed against each other and us, continued through five years of anarchy.

ANNUS MUNDI 6304 (SEPTEMBER 1, 811—AUGUST 31, 812)

A.D. 804

Roman Emperor Michael: 2 years: year 1

Arab ruler Muhammad: 4 years: year 4

Bishop of Rome Leo: 16 years: year 16

Bishop of Constantinople Nikephoros: 9 years: year 7

Harun's first son Muhammad, who was ruling his people, attacked his brother Abd Allah in the Persian interior but was defeated. He took refuge in Baghdad and ruled there. A different rebel held Damascus, and two divided up Egypt and Africa; yet another piratically plundered Palestine.

Source: Harry Turtledove, *The Chronicle of Theophanes: An English translation of anni mundi 6095-6305 (A.D. 602-813)*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1982, pp. 34-36; 45-47; 52; 63-66; 69-70; 90-91; 108-109; 114; 116-118; 124-125; 165; 173; 176

NOTES

83. That is, the Roman (or Byzantine) Empire.
84. Constans II was assassinated in Sicily in 668 (see below, under annus mundi 6160).
85. Actually, in 632.
86. Or, “the Christ.”
87. The camel is an unclean beast under Jewish dietary standards.
88. The eponymous ancestor of Muhammad’s tribe.
89. This is the Byzantine name for the Himyarites, a pre-Muslim Arab state in the Yemen.
90. That is, Medina, to which Muhammad emigrated from Mecca in 622.
91. Under Diocletian’s reforms at the end of the third century, the Empire was divided into about a dozen dioceses, each of which was composed of several small provinces and administered by a vicar. These officials, between provincial governors and the great praetorian prefects in authority, were partially removed from the governmental hierarchy by Justinian I in the 530s.
92. Theophanes must have had some source ultimately derived from the Arabs to know this, for it was among them that Khalid ibn al-Walid bore this title, which was given him by Muhammad. Although he fought against the Muslims until 629, Khalid became one of their greatest marshals. He helped defeat the Arabs who tried to apostasize after Muhammad’s death, and went on to conquer Syria and Palestine and aid in the attack on Persia.
93. That is, the mouths of the desert wadis or dry riverbeds (my thanks to S. Thomas Parker for this suggestion).
107. The Kharijites are Muslim extremists. They insisted it was the duty of all Muslims at all times to inspire men to do good and prevent them from doing evil, even at the cost of life itself. They were not prepared under any conditions to let circumstances alter cases. The Kharijites saw those less extreme than themselves as no true Muslims, and physically attacked them. The sect survives to this day, but as a tiny minority in Islam.
114. Invented about this time, Greek fire was so efficiently kept a state secret by the Byzantines that its precise composition still causes scholarly debate. It was definitely a flammable liquid which would burn on the surface of the sea; a modern analog might be napalm.
115. The “siphon” was a metal tube through which Greek fires, was discharged.
116. A small harbor located just east of the greatest of Constantinople’s harbors, that of Eleutherios (also known as that of Theodosios).
133. During the reign of Justinian II, Byzantine coinage began to feature an image of Christ, an image naturally unacceptable to the Muslims. Until this time the Arabs had closely imitated Byzantine models in their coinage; now they began an independent series of gold coins, minted

on a lighter standard than the nomisma. After an intermediate series featuring a standing caliph on the obverse, by 696-697 Arab coinage was totally aniconic.

134. Actually, this appears to be the eclipse of October 5, 693.

142. The eagle is the Byzantine symbol of the imperium, a tradition going back to Roman days. A vision of an eagle would have been thought by all concerned to be a portent of coming power.

176. Which, of course, caulked the ships.

177. Islamic law always prohibited Muslims from drinking wine; Umar is attempting to apply the law to all his subjects, whether Muslim or not.

211. Another name for Antioch is Theopolis—the city of God.

212. Originally, logothetes were accountants. As Byzantine bureaucracy evolved and many late-Roman offices disappeared during the crises of the seventh and eighth centuries, logothetes began to fill their functions, and the title came to mean “minister.”

213. Manichaeism was a dualistic religion combining elements of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism founded by the Persian prophet Mani in the third century a . d . It associated the material world with the evil power in the universe; thus, observant Manichaeans lived lives of great asceticism. Manichaeism was rarely able to find a state to support it; its followers were persecuted minorities wherever they lived.

214. A Greek form of the Hebrew word mamzer—“bastard.”

223. This [Maurophoroi] is Theophanes’ conventional term for the Abbasids and their backers. Black was the Abbasid color; they rose to power by gaining the backing of the followers of Ali’s murdered descendants, and wore black as a token of their mourning for the slain Alids.

224. The Umayyad caliphate ruled the Arabs from 661 to 750.

225. Once more, Deuteronomy 32:20.

230. See above, under anni mundi 6185 and 6186. The Slavs who had deserted to the Arabs at that time were settled in Syria.

284. Eremitic monks, as opposed to their coenobitic brothers (see above, note 250) live as hermits and, though they may meet for meals and some prayers, do not form a true community; each monk goes his own way on most occasions.

